



The Traditionally-Rich Verbal Culture of the Turkish Peasantry

Sinan Çaya^{[a].*}

^[a]Ph.D., Istanbul University, Institute of Marine Administration and Sciences, Turkey.

*Corresponding author.

Received 20 December 2014; accepted 5 March 2015

Published online 25 April 2015

Abstract

The rural Turkish culture is essentially verbal but it is quite rich with its end results visible in precious anonymous tales, proverbs, idioms reflecting wisdom, funeral songs, ballads, folk songs. The long line of tradition affects the intellectual in downtown centers, which has its proof in a random diction uttered on a given occasion.

Key words: Culture; Peasant; Turkish; Verbal

Çaya, S. (2015). The Traditionally-Rich Verbal Culture of the Turkish Peasantry. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 11(4), 17-24. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/6460>
 DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/6460>

INTRODUCTION

Peasants are poetic even though they are not on good terms with written prose. *Kemalist* poet *Behçet Kemâl Çağlar* — he was my Turkish literature teacher in Lycée One class— came from rural *Erzincan* and a part of him resembled the folk poet beside the thinking and meticulously working studious intellectual poet element also present in him. He could compose rhyming stanzas almost on any occasion and because of this was very popular in his life time. When visiting France, for instance, he wanted to see his poet friend *Kemalettin Kamu*, the representative of Anatolian Agency there. He at once wrote a rhyming couplet: “I wait for you in the *gare / Behçet Kemâl Çağlar*”. The postman accepting the cable laughed.

Villagers’ valuing poets has its historical roots. Central Anatolian shamans were also poets. *Many ancient written works surviving to this day are in poetic style. Glorification of deities in temples and implorations accompanied by sacrificial rituals at altars were recited in poetry. Poetry has been associated with magic while the poet with magician* (Turhan September, 1982, p.35). Holy Koran is more of poetry than prose (and thus a lot easier to memorize than any other volume of same length in sheer prose).

My literature teacher *Şefik Bey* told us an anecdote. A *Sorbonne*-graduated snob, high placed in a Ministry in capitol asked Anatolian sub-governors for some statistical information about the heating measures taken in their districts. From a remote district came the answer that the main energy source was dung. The snobbish bureaucrat asked for further explanation. What was dung? What was its calorific value and the annually consumed amount? The answer was cabled in rhymes at once by the sub-governor: “*Tezek boktur / Miktarı çoktur / Kalorisi yoktur*”^(1a) (Dung means shit / It is in abundance / It contain little if any calories).

Delaney (1991, p.50) by reference to Dundes, Leach and Özkök (1972) comments about verbal dueling rhymes practiced by adolescent males: “In this verbal game the retort must rhyme with the initial provocative insult and encompass it; and the subject is the active, aggressive male, and this is the culturally important role”. Delaney does not give any examples. One such common rhyming duel would go as follows (To keep the rhymes, only train is adapted to aircraft and place names are altered): The

¹Sometimes some funny correspondence is known to occur in bureaucracy. A biologist, Murat Meşhur narrated the following: A prospective pimp once applied for permission to a governor to open a brothel. The governor scrutinized the petition and annotated the margin of the sheet in red ink: “Let this request stay in suspension until a whorehouse-lover-governor (*kerhaneci bir vâli*) arrives to take over my post”.

first boy says something rhyming. The second boy retorts: “It has just heavily rained and here comes the thunder / How come you also became a poet, the son of an ass as you yourself render!”. The first boy has his saying again: “The plane took off from here and landed in Honolulu / If I also became a poet, why would that upset a male prostitute like you?”.

1. ANONYMOUS QUADRUPLES

In villages girls and women like to recite quadruples called *mâni*. Some improvise their own ingenious *mâni* verses. The stanzas fall in rhyme and there lies the value. In the small village *Alpullu* an authentic quadruple recited by a girl from *Samafor* (station) neighborhood in the Turkish class of the junior high school —I now appreciate our Turkish teacher *Ömer Bey* better for encouraging such research as homework— went as follows:

*The rain falls and drips the soil wet
In cascades from high altitudes
And the gentlemen of our street
All feign to be polite dudes!*

(“*Yağmur yağar sine sine
Samafor Deresi'ne
Samafor beylerinin
Fiyaka neresine?*”)

Another nice *mani* was improvised by a high school girl when *Nermin Hanım*, their literature teacher assigned such a task for the class. The teacher, my colleague then, liked it a lot and publicized it in the teachers’ room. But she did not reveal the girl’s identity, in accordance with the promise she had accorded her:

*The air rises, bizarre comes the sound
As for the weather, look, it is all cloud
And the darling handsome boy I fancy
Has his upper lip just getting fuzzy !*

(“*Hava havalanyor,
Hava bulutlanyor;
Benim sevdiğim yârim
Yeni bıyıklanyor !*)

2. RIDDLES AND PUNS

Children usually play many outdoor games. For boys wrestling ^(2*) comes first. But in winter nights and at other times when they are together indoors, both boys and girls like to recite puns of words (tongue twisters) or test

²In some southern regions like Denizli even camel wrestling games are arranged.. Awesome looking camels with beautiful eyes decorated saddles and with their mouths contained in chain masks participate in the games. Whenever festivities are held for a mosque or school construction camel wrestling is remembered (Kaptan 1988: 96).

one another with riddles. Turkish is very convenient for deriving other words from a given root word and a famous tongue-twister is supposedly the longest word in the world, thanks to additions of suffixes one after the other:

Are from one of those whom we could not checkoslovakianize?

(*Çekoslavakyalılaştıramadıklarımızdanmısınız?*).

Turkish is very rich in riddles too. Peasant children as well as city children like riddles. He who knows more riddles than others acquires prestige. Some examples of anonymous riddles are:

*When I bought it at the shop it was one
But at home it came to be a thousand!*

(The expected answer is a pomegranate)

Allah makes its structure

A human being opens its gate

(The expected answer is a watermelon)

3. IDIOMS AND PROVERBS

Many idioms and proverbs enrich speech and strengthen the defended cause in arguments. Two proverbs originating from Erzurum and registered by Bulut (1984, pp.89, 90) are as follows:

My ration's morsel may well be tiny

But at least I'm free from headaches

This idiom represents the contented situation of a person who lives in scarcity but away from burdens and responsibilities which could lead to probable trouble.

The lords are indebted to the thieves

This idiom says that nobody is immune to the threat of theft. Even well-protected rich people can be victimized by thieves. The proverb is uttered to console a theft victim's grief and boost his spirit.

An interesting feminist proverb is generated to my mother from her maternal grand mother, who had arrived in Turkey at middle age from rural Macedonia during the population exchange decreed by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1924. (My older uncle had been a baby on his mother's lap. At the border he had pointed to the Greek soldier and simulated a cutting motion directed to his own little throat but the soldier just laughed off).

Ayşe Hanım had been an unhappy woman. She had fancied a handsome young man courting her mounted on a chestnut colored noble horse in her youth. The wives of her two big brothers were jealous of her. They had discredited her in the eyes of the family of the young good looking man (She had been supposed to be lazy). Instead they had arranged her wedding to a somewhat rude and rough (but good hearted) Albanian man. She had kept her children all to herself and her favorite motto to make her husband look cold in the eyes of the children followed from an archaic proverb. *Ayşe Hanım* must have transmitted her feminist views to her favorite grandchild, my mother. *Ayşe Hanım* had a long life span. We learned about her death from a letter when we were in Ankara and

I was at the age of six. The proverb, to the detriment of the father, indirectly praises the mother. Written in original Macedonian form in phonetic writing, it goes as follows:

U-bay-ko su kur-ut mak-sim prave, su kur-ut mi-luve !
{ *Father makes the child with his phallus (and accordingly)*
loves (or rather deigns to love)(merely) by his phallus!}

Another metaphor full of wisdom which she had revealed to her grandchildren is this: “If man at a certain age ever falls in love, by God, it is like an old dirty rag catching fire and is much more difficult to extinguish than a new piece of cloth burning!”.

4. BALLADS

In villages melodic ballads (folk songs) are very popular but classical Turkish music comes somewhat heavy for villagers to understand. The former is traditionally associated with peasantry while the latter is the “cup of coffee” of refined, educated city-dwellers. Parallel differentiation of music tastes regarding country music on one side and popular or classical music on the other should be valid for other countries including America. The tradition of saz-playing poets is unfortunately dying. Some inspiration-full able saz-poets (*rhapsodes*), until about two decades ago, could even compete with one another in musical repartees by improvising verbal melodic compositions on the spot! Unfortunately they are almost all gone now.

Again a very interesting heroic *épopée* blessing one’s weapon in *Pomak* language was taught to me by my father. The population of his village ^(3*) came collectively from *Leshnisa-Plevna* during 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War. My father’s grandfather *Mahmud Agha* had been a child then. The ballad was sung in the village until 1940’s. The new generations are forgetting that language more and more. Again written in original form in phonetic writing, it goes as follows:

Moy-te-ya ja-ni tun-ka-ta-mi puş-ka
Moy-te-sa det-sa sit-ne-te fi-şe-si
Ma-ke-da-tu gi-ot-prata tam-vra-vat
Plaçi may-ko plaçi pa-sa-na plaçi !
Gley li-be-ley da-sa-na gley !

³ In July 1984, Staff Colonel *Ali Meralcan*, commandant of the Tenth Armored Regiment in *Kırklareli* said the following words in an assembly with his newly joined officers: “For the anniversary of *Çanakkale* Victory, which we celebrated four months ago, I had intended to fetch here a veteran (*gazi*) of that battle. I had made a screening of the whole Thrace to find one. By great chance, in the village of *Mandıra* I found not just one, but two together!” So, it was the honor and the sacred luck of that very same village, to provide two veterans for the victory ceremony held in March 15, 1984 in the Tenth Armored Regiment in *Kırklareli*. The action in Gallipoli had occurred in 1915. The two former warriors therefore must have been at least 89 or 90 years old at the time of that commemoration day.

Nes-ka sam-si tu-ka za-ra na-ma ne-ma!
{ *My wife is my elegant gun*
and my sons are my bullets
Wherever I shoot them there they go (find the target)
Cry mother, cry! To your satiation, fully cry!
Look, my darling, look! Give here a full free look!
For today here I am, but tomorrow I’m absent ! }

5. TURKISH-MADE MOVIES

Before the introduction of the television the peasant youth culture was totally different from the urban youth culture. Peasant boys did not have access to popular comic spirits (*Teksas, Tommiks, Zagor* etc.) and foreign movies about cowboys, ancient Romans and Hercules, secret agents, detectives etc. In the village where my mother was teacher only updated Turkish movies were played in a movie theater improvised from a barn, where wooden benches substituted armchairs and a support pole in the middle partly hindered the screen sight.

The heroes of the peasant boys and girls were *Eşref Kolçak, Orhan Günşiray, Ayhan Işık, Efkan Efekan* had his own place in their opinion. *Göksel Arsoy* with his golden hair, fair skin and European look did not quite appeal to their taste at the time but his steady co-actress *Leylâ Sayar* was well-liked as the *esas kız* (heroine). *Suna Pekuysal* was popular as a comedian; so was *Suphi Kaner* (he committed suicide). *Yılmaz Güney* was yet beginning to shine; but new movies were too expensive to bring there.

They did not know a thing about foreign movies. Even today they don’t watch foreign movies on TV. If they seldom do, they don’t get curious about the names of the actors and actresses. The serial *Dallas* is an exception in 1980’s. There too the names of characters like *Sue Ellen* got to be known instead of the actress’ name.

Some years ago I went to the restroom of a passage in *Beyoğlu*, the most urbanized center of *Istanbul*. Here the men’s section is indicated with an actor’s picture instead of the common pipe or hat sign or a man’s *silhouette* or even comic character *Popeye*. An elderly man was in charge of the toilets. For all his low status job he proved to be a proud city person. While leaving the *chiottes* I searched for some coins in my wallet to tip him and I asked about the picture on the men’s WC.

The man made a grimace and expressed his disapproval, looking down upon that uncultured but decently dressed toilet-customer. Then I said “my sight is not so keen, I recognized *Marlyn Monroe* on the door to the ladies’ section. But that picture over there is so absurdly small for me to recognize”. He then half took my apology and answered: “That guy is *James Dean*; how come you don’t know him if you know *Marlyn*?” I answered that I indeed knew the idol of the rebellious youth, the actor of the *West Side Story*. The man gave a

broad smile and put some *eau de cologne* in my palm with a respectful gesture. My city-dweller status was acknowledged in his eyes.

6. FUNERAL SONGS

Funeral songs have in important weighting especially when a young person dies. Rhyming words then are improvised and with a tune fall out the mouths of females. Rarely males do it too. In 1993 I participated in a funeral ceremony held in a village ^(4*) of *Yaprakli-Chankiri*, for a fallen soldier. The body of the martyr had arrived from the Southeast. Close female relatives of the dead soldier were lamenting and improvising funeral songs.

Just after the ceremonial burying, the father of the dead soldier; an old, bearded man; also began his own funeral songs (which is rare for males to do so). In a melodious voice the old man uttered sentences like: “Oh, my son! My precious, brave son! Once I wanted to go to *Chankiri* but had no money. Then I secretly searched your wallet, found your ten-markie-bill (*ton petit 10-mark-note*) (*senin o on markçığını*) and I took it! How I repent it now!”.

Many folk songs were originally funeral songs like the slow rhythm ballad sung after the dead girl named *Ferayi* and the marvelous ballad *Arda Riverbanks* bitterly sung by *Shukruye Tutkun*. They are deeply moving pieces of music accompanied by melancholic words. As Bayrı (1947, 1972, p.131) notes in *Istanbul there is no tradition of funeral songs for a dead person. The relatives, friends and acquaintances just visit the house to present their condolences*. The same is true for almost all urban centers.

In Islam funeral songs are not encouraged. They are supposed to suffer the dead person’s soul. For that matter feud is openly forbidden in Islam, too. But feuds do happen. Christianity seems to be no different in that respect. Etori (1978, pp.248, 259) gives an interesting example of a Corsican —a very traditional ^(5**) Mediterranean island even though in Europe —funeral song (*vocero*) at the end of the eighteenth century during the church service. The clergyman warns a woman who keeps crying funeral songs during the church office service of the dead.

The funeral singer (*vocératrice*), however, does not hold back from retorting to the priest himself:

Ancu vo, o sgiò curà / Diti: chiati chiati! / Ma no perdimi roba è ghjenniti / E'à vo vi crescini l'intrati ».

The French translation is provided near the Italian

⁴In this same village I saw a white-bearded old peasant driving a motor-bike and was quite amazed. I also saw a tractor going with one front wheel missing! It was stable enough because the front wheels are much smaller than the rear ones. s.c.

⁵The August 1924 issue of the *Encyclopedia Sciences et Voyages* writes (p.11) that there stay some retrograde places where people are not drifted into the stunning speed of the mechanized age and where even the most painful labors are still done manually and depicts Corsica as one.

Corsican dialect as follows: « *Vous aussi, Monsieur le curé / Vous dites: taisez-vous, taisez-vous ! / Mais nous, nous perdons corps et biens / Et pour vous les entrées augmentent ».*

All that means is the following: “You too [Reverend] priest / you say: *Shut up, shut up!* / *But we, we lose life and fortunes / While your income just grows*”.

7. FOLK TALES

Villagers used to like fairy tales more than city people. (Nowadays the television is intruding in their lives, too). Remembering his village days in childhood, Şanal (July 2009: 26) an exceptionally lettered boy in his time, writes: *In sleepless, half-happy nights books like Ali the Blessed and His Holy Wars, with their extravagant styles were part of my childhood literature. The Blessed Prophet’s Sacred Birth, The Story of the Cut Head, Battal Gazi the Ottoman Warrior must I also mention. Ali the Blessed upon his horse, his scimitar in hand, used to disperse thousands of infidels, without getting a scratch himself.* [City boys in the mean time could have been reading the translation of *Sans Famille* by *Hector Mallot*, like I did].

There is a contrast between winter and summer activities. In summer outdoor life and work goes on. In winter assemblies in take place *köy odası* (village hall). Women do their own assemblies at homes, modeling the child soul and mind. The old men, other times left to the company of one another in the shade of a plain tree before the coffee house, now get the opportunity to have attentive ears around them. Winter is their season. Now legends and epos and tales have free reign to pour out of the mouths (de Planhol 1958, p.346).

In the village at winter nights people gather and tell tales. Tales are told and listened to by both men and women. Among men or women some excel in tale telling. The most famous one in *Eylen* village is the poorest man (C.Tanyol, 1966, p.64).

Tales involving some puzzles and wisdom besides moral principles are more in favor among adults. As Tuğrul (1969, p.70) points out; (in anonymous verbal literature) *exam and difficult question motifs are related to testing and trying patterns which are applied for making a wish come true, getting rid of a misfortune or just satisfying some curiosity. The patterns can be grouped as ordering ordeals; replying hard questions; testing to see if a claim, promise or one’s loyalty is genuine or not ; competitions and bets.*

A wonderful tale embodying such test motifs is provided in the collection of Boratav (1967, pp.263-265) under the title “If I Send a Goose Can You Pluck it?” :

One day the sultan in disguise makes a tour of the capitol with his vizier. They come across a house in front of which a young girl was doing some sewing work. The sultan began to chat with her:

— Where is your father?

- He went to make many out of one.
- Where is your mother?
- She went to make two out of one?
- I see that your chimney is oblique.
- That is so; but the smoke rises up straight.
- If I send you a goose, can you pluck it?
- I can until the finest duvet!

The sultan on the return way asks his vizier what he can make out of this chat. He threatens to give him to the executioner if the answer fails. The vizier implores the sultan for a deadline in two days to think all about it. Next day he finds the girl and requires an explanation. The girl says each answer has its pay in gold coins. He agrees. Here is the solution to the mystery: The girl's father was a chopper; so he made many pieces of wood from one tree. Her mother was a mid-wife. So she helped a pregnant wife to bear her child (One became two). She was squinting, true. But her sight (smoke out of chimney) was good. And the vizier who paid for all that knowledge was the plucked goose of course.

A slightly different version was told by *Dr. Belli* at *Chukurova* Chair of Legal Medicine. The next evening at social facilities I joined the table of *Dr. Kemâl Melek*, with whom I was acquainted with from Bosphorous University days. A guest, a certain *Dr. Malamid* from an American University was at his table. To entertain the guest I told my newly-learned tale to the pleasure of both scholars during the dinner.

In *Dr. Belli's* version the sultan is named as *Murad* the Fourth. (He and *Mahmud* the Second are known to go around the city, incognito). The girl is replaced by a boatman rowing them across the Golden Horn. No threat is in question but the vizier is curious and amazed at his own stupidity. So, finds the boatman the next day. In this version the questions are:

- How do you get along with Thirty-Two?
- I multiply it by thirty and always obtain fifteen.
- Nowadays they report about thieves. Did one enter your house?
- Three months ago, praise to Allah! Hopefully another will soon come!
- Good!
- If I send you a goose, can you pluck it?
- I can until the finest duvet!

As for the clues, here they are: The boatman was asked about his gain (thirty-two teeth). He said every month repeatedly he could feed himself every other day (a total of fifteen days out of thirty). Nowadays marriages were being arranged often. (A bride was a "spoon-thief" coming into the house of his father-in-law). The boatman married one son and planned to marry another, hopefully. As for the goose to be plucked, it is his Excellency the vizier again.

Once during my parents' separation I (4th grade) and my elder brother (5th grade) were sent to my father's village with an accompanying bitter letter from my

mother, challenging my father's folk to care for us for a fortnight, as a change. Father himself was God knows where at the time.

We the two brothers kept commuting to our *Alpullu*-school on foot along with the junior-high-village-group. The distance now was twice that from our home base, the other village where my mother took up the school-teaching job.

In the evening in the crowded family my aunts were telling local supernatural stories, legends⁽⁶⁾ and horrifying ghost tales while we were preparing homework in the light of gasoline lamps. (Later, my mother's folk would interpret those tales as a subtle intimidation, aiming to gain our consent for transfer to the local primary school; thereby avoiding "fearful" daily trips to and from *Alpullu*).

One tale was about the scaring evil spirit (which had the same name as a scare-crow in Turkish, *korkuluk*). The scaring-spirit once appeared to a young widow on her return way from a neighbor's visit, at sunset, with an ironic smile as if to mean "let's see who will rescue you from my hands now".

The clever woman said to it: "Hi there my sister-in-law (*Schwägerin, belle-sœur*), but your face is somewhat distorted this evening for some reason or other!" The scaring-spirit eased its manners curiously: "So, do I look like your sister-in-law?" and got the answer "you sure do; you are a lady, a female and you resemble my sister-in-law".

Approaching the house, the evil-spirit asked the same question once again: "So, do I look like your sister-in-law?" and she again got the answer "you sure do; you are a lady, a female and you resemble my sister-in-law".

A few moments later the spirit for the third time asked the same question and received exactly the same answer automatically. At the house door, the widow temporized her finding the key. She diverted the attention of the spirit by referring to the blossoming fruit trees. Then she blast the door open, jumped inside and shut the door immediately.

From behind the door, the widow now shouted: "You are neither my sister-in-law nor a lady. You are just a lowly prostitute!" The spirit replied disappointedly that the same words a few moments ago would have gotten her a strike like lightning.

When my aunt finished the tale I was astonished that the spirit could not transcend a material-wall like an ordinary jinn could do. Moreover; as a boy I found the adventure of a heroin somewhat insipid, and there were no other auxiliary characters for me to identify with, either, I must say.

⁶ One was about a soldier stabbed to death by a young farmer because of a love affair, half a century before our times. The martyr-soldier's soul would sometimes moan and wail in the *Ergene* river basin filling the passer-bys with panic.

CONCLUSION

The peasant culture in Turkey, having its roots in historical nomadic times, is verbal and prone to poetry rather than prose. Poetic style is easier to remember. In fact late *Atilla İlhan*, a famous poet, once defined poetry as verses which stick to one's memory without giving up a fight. This culture is rich and full of plain but well-experienced people's wisdom acquired and distilled over centuries.

REFERENCES

- [*Encyclopedie] Sciences et Voyages* (No.261, p.11) (1924, Août 28). Section under the title "Un pays ou la machine n'a pas encore pénétré".
- Bayri, M. H. (1947, 1972). *Istanbul Folkloru*. İstanbul, Turkey: Baha Matbaası.
- Boratav, P. N. (1967). *Türkische volksmärchen*, (Übersetzung von Doris Schultz und György Hazai). Akademie-Verlag, Berlin (pp.34-35). The Tale titled, Wenn Ich eine Gans schicke, rupfst du sie dann?.
- Bulut, S. (1984). *Kuşaktan kuşağa erzurum folkloru*. Ankara: Emekli Ofset.
- de Planhol, X. (1964). *de la Plaine Pamphylieenne aux lacs pisidiens: Nomadisme et vie paysanne*. Paris, France: Librairie Adrien-Maisonneuve.

- Delaney, C. (1991). *The seed and the soil: Gender and cosmology in Turkish village society*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Ettori, F. (1978). Introduction à l'étude du vocero. In M. Caisson, A. Casanova, F. J. Casta, et al. (Eds.), *Pieve e paesi: Communités rurales corses*. Paris, France: Éditions du centre national de la recherche scientifique.
- Kaptan, Ş. T. (1988). *Denizli'nin Halk Kültürü Ürünleri, Cilt I [Folk culture products in the city of Denizli]*. Denizli, Turkey: Yenigün Ofset Matbaacılık.
- Şanal, A. (July 2009). Kırsal kesim çocuğu-I" [The Country-boy-I]. *Ankara: Öğretmen Dünyası Dergisi [Journal of the teachers' world]*, (355), 25-28.
- Tanyol, C. (1966). Eylen [Kilis] Köyü. *Sosyoloji Dergisi [Journal of sociology]* (19-20), 38-98. İstanbul: Fakülteler Matbaası.
- Tuğrul, M. (1969). *Mahmutgazi Köyünde Halk Edebiyatı (Menkıbe, Hikâye, Masal, Fıkra)[Folk Literature in the Village of Mahmutgazi (Legends, Stories, Fairy Tales, Funny Anecdotes)]*. İstanbul, Turkey: Millî Eğitim Basımevi.
- Turhan, M. N. (1992,September). Bâtıl İtikatlar, Sosyal Yeri ve Önemi [Superstitions, Their Social Position and Significance]. *Toplumbilim [Sociology]*, (1), 34-37. Ankara: Bağlam Yayınları.

APPENDIX

Related Visual Material



Figures 1 & 2
An Aegean and a Thracian Rural Coffee Shop. Coffee shops are the best places for men to socialize and engage in hours of talking. (Photo by the author—S. Ç.)



Figure 3
Former oil-wrestler and later dry-mat-wrestler-in-America, *Koca Yusuf*, was world-famous. He got drowned in 1898 during the return trip by ship. This life-size cardboard-cut-off of the wrestler is in the Wrestlers' Museum in *Edirne (Adrinople)*. Oil wrestlers are like the idols of villagers. Until a few decades ago villagers used to follow their adventures given in serial by some conservative newspapers. (Photo by the author—S. Ç.)



Figure 4
A couple of peasant men as eager spectators at *Kırkpınar* oil-wrestling festivities (July 2011). (Photo by the author—S. Ç.)



Figure 5
A Halva Stand. *Halva* is the favorite dessert of peasantry, especially because it is durable and thus usually available at the village shop. Halva eating accompanies story-telling in long winter nights. A diabetic peasant man at a village tea-shop was cursing the doctor who had ordained him strict abstinence from that delicious delicacy! Lamenting over the “probable threat of death” he kept asking his friends: “*Won’t the doctor himself die?*” (Photo by the author—S. Ç.).



Figures 6 & 7
Village drummer and festivities (by late painting-course-teacher *Muazzam Bey*)



Figures 8 & 9
One might as well talk about a tobacco “culture” along with certain “rituals” like the use of cigarette-holders and tobacco-cases. In villages smoking is common and mutual cigarette-offerings facilitate friendly talks. (Scanned by the author—S. Ç.)